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The material translated below comes from eddic poems and Snorri Sturluson’s *Edda*, our two chief sources for creation and origin themes in Norse myth. The poems mostly date from probably the tenth and eleventh centuries, though they were first collected in writing in the thirteenth century in Iceland. Snorri’s *Edda* is a textbook of heathen myth and poetry written by a Christian Icelander ca. 1220-25. Iceland officially converted to Christianity in 999/1000. All translations are my own from the following editions:

Gustav Neckel, ed. *Edda: Die Lieder des Codex Regius nebst verwandten Denkmälern*. 5th ed., rev. by Hans Kuhn. Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1983.

Snorri Sturluson. *Edda: Gylfaginning and Prologue*. Ed. by Anthony Faulkes. 2nd ed. London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 2005.

Snorri Sturluson. *Edda: Skáldskaparmál*. Ed. by Anthony Faulkes. 2 vols. London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 1998.

I. Material for Cosmogony, Anthropogony and Theogony

A. *Gylfaginning* (The Tricking of Gylfi), ch. 3: *Gylfaginning*, the second major part of Snorri’s *Edda*, is a prose summary of Norse myth set within the frame of a dialogue between King Gylfi of Sweden, disguised under the name Gangleri, and three Æsir, sorcerous invaders from Troy.

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Gangleri began thus his conversation: “Who is the highest and oldest of all gods?” Hár [High] says: “That one is called Alföðr [All-Father] in our speech, but in Ásgarðr the old he had twelve names... Then Gangleri asks: “Where is that god, and what can he do, and what wondrous works has he performed?” Hár says: “He lives through all ages and rules all his kingdom and controls all things great and small.” Then Jafnhár [Just-as-High] speaks: “He fashioned heaven and earth and sky and all of their contents.” Then Þriði [Third] spoke: “He made man and gave to him that spirit which shall live and never perish.” ... Then Gangleri says: “What was he doing before heaven and earth were made?” Hár answers: “Then he was among the frost-giants.” Gangleri says: “What was the beginning? Or how did things start? Or what was before?” Hár answers: “As it says in *Völuspá*...”

B. *Völuspá* (The Prophecy of the Völva, a seeress): an eddic poem composed ca. 1000.

- 3: It was ages ago, when Ymir dwelt (or: when nothing was),
there was neither sand nor sea nor cold waves;
earth was not at all to be found or the sky above,
the chasm was yawning, and grass nowhere.
- 4: First Burr’s sons lifted up the earth, they who a glorious middle-enclosure made...
- 17: Until three came from that troop, mighty and beneficent, Æsir, to a house;
they found on the land, capable of little, Askr and Embla, without fate.
- 18: ... Óðinn gave breath, Hœnir gave spirit, Lóðurr gave warmth and good looks.
- 59: She sees come up a second time from the ocean earth, ever-green...

C. *Vafþrúðnismál* (The Sayings of Vafþrúðnir, a giant): a perhaps ninth-century eddic poem.

21: From Ymir’s flesh earth was made, and mountains from his bones,
the sky from the skull of the frost-cold giant, and the sea from his blood.

D. *Grímnismál* (The Sayings of Grímnir, i.e., Óðinn): a perhaps ninth-century eddic poem.

40: From Ymir’s flesh earth was made, and the sea from his blood,
mountains from bones, trees from hair and from his skull the sky.
41: And from his eyebrows the blithe gods made Miðgarðr for the sons of men;
and from his brains were the hard-minded clouds all made.

II. Material for the Origins of Runes (*rúnar*)

A. *Hávamál* (The Sayings of the High One, i.e. Óðinn): an eddic poem from the 900s-1100s.

138: I know, that I hung on a windy beam for all of nine nights,
wounded by a spear and given to Óðinn, myself given to me by myself...
139: ... downwards I peered; I took up the runes, screaming I took them,
I fell back from there.

B. *Sigrdrífumál* (The Sayings of Sigrdrífa, a valkyrie): an eddic poem from perhaps the 1000s.

13: Mind-runes you must know if you want to be wiser in spirit than any other man;
Hroptr [Óðinn] interpreted them, carved them, thought them out,
from that liquid, which had leaked from the skull of Bright-Dripper
and from the horn of Treasure-Tearer.
18: All were shaved off, those which were carved on,
and scattered with the sacred mead, and sent far and wide.
They are among the Æsir, they are with the elves,
some are with the wise Vanir, some human men possess.

III. Material for the Origins of Poetry (*skáldskapr*)

A. *Skáldskaparmál* (The Language of Poetry), ch. G57: *Skáldskaparmál*, the third major part of Snorri’s *Edda*, focuses on poetic diction, but contains a myth of the origins of poetry. It is set within the frame of a dialogue between a god named Bragi and a giant named Ægir.

Then Ægir says: “From where did the craft that you call poetry originate?” Bragi answers: “That was the beginning of this that the gods had a conflict with that folk who are called the Vanir, but they held a peace-meeting and established a truce in this way that each of the two parties went to a vat and spat their saliva into it... and shaped from that a man. He is called Kvasir. He is so wise that no one asks him about anything to which he does not know the answer. He travels widely about the world to teach men wisdom, and when he came to the dwelling of certain dwarves, Fjalarr and Galarr, then they called him to a private meeting with them and they killed him, and let his blood run into two vats and a kettle... They blended honey with the blood and thereby produced a mead whoever drinks from which becomes a poet or a learned man...”

[Fjalarr and Galarr then kill a giant named Gillingr. The dwarves offer Suttungr] as atonement in compensation for his father the precious mead, and thus the matter was settled between them. Suttungr carries the mead home and conceals it in that place called Hnitbjörg, and puts in charge of it his daughter Gunnlöð. Because of this we call poetry Kvasir’s blood or dwarves’ drink... or Suttungr’s mead or liquid of Hnitbjörg...

... Óðinn called himself Bölverkr. He offered to perform the work of nine men for Baugi, and requests for himself in payment a drink of Suttungr’s mead... Baugi asks Suttungr his brother for Bölverkr’s payment, but Suttungr flatly refuses any drop of the mead... [Baugi assists Óðinn into sneaking into the mountain where the mead is stored.] Bölverkr went to where Gunnlöð was and he slept with her for three nights, and then she allowed him to drink from the mead three draughts... [Óðinn empties the vessels of the mead.] Then he took on an eagle’s form and flew away as quickly as he could. And when Suttungr saw the flight of the eagle, then he took his own eagle’s shape and flew after him. And when the Æsir saw where Óðinn flew they set out in the yard a vat, and when Óðinn came in over Ásgarðr then he spat up the mead into the vat, but Suttungr had come so close to catching him that he sent some of the mead backward, and of that nothing was saved. That is had by whoever wants it, and we call that the rhymesters’ portion. But Óðinn gave Suttungr’s mead to the Æsir and to those men who know how to compose. Thus we call poetry Óðinn’s booty or find, and his drink and his gift...”

B. *Hávamál* (The Sayings of the High One, i.e., Óðinn):

104-7: I sought the old giant... in Suttungr’s hall.

Gunnlöð gave to me... a drink of the precious mead;...

Óðrerir [rouser of poetry] has now come up to the rims of the sanctuaries of men.